

Amendments to Claims

In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric comprising a support web and a fibrous barrier web consisting of ~~continuous~~ fibers having average diameters of less than 1.0 micrometer, optionally coated with a hydrophobic material, having a hydrohead of between about 145 cm and about 400 cm and a Frazier permeability of between about 0.3 m³/m²-min and about 11.2 m³/m²-min.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Canceled).
4. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein said barrier web fibers have average diameters of less than 0.5 micrometer.
5. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the barrier layer basis weight is between about 5 and 51 g/m².
6. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 4, wherein the barrier layer has a basis weight of between about 13 and 51 g/m².
7. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein said barrier web comprises nanofibers of hydrophobic polymer or copolymer.
8. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 7, wherein said hydrophobic polymer or copolymer is a polyolefin, a partially fluorinated polymer or a perfluorinated polymer.
9. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 8, wherein said hydrophobic polymer or copolymer has repeating units derived from ethylene, propylene, butenes, hexenes, octenes, styrenes, 4-methylpentene-1 and combinations thereof.
10. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein said barrier web is rendered hydrophobic by coating with said hydrophobic coating.
11. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 10, wherein said hydrophobic coating is a fluorocarbon coating material.

12. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the barrier web has a maximum pore size between fibers of no more than about ~~23~~ 12 micrometers.
13. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein the barrier web has a solids fraction of no less than about 0.03.
14. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven barrier fabric comprising a fibrous barrier web consisting of ~~continuous~~ fibers having average diameters of less than 1.0 micrometer, optionally coated with a hydrophobic material, said fabric having a hydrohead of between about 145 cm and about 400 cm and a Frazier permeability of between about 0.3 m³/m²-min and about 11.2 m³/m²-min and having a relationship between barrier web basis weight, and fabric hydrohead and Frazier permeability described by the formula:

$$\text{Bwt(g/m}^2\text{)} \leq \frac{4000 \cdot c \cdot (1 - 2.3 \cdot c) \cdot \rho_f}{\text{Frazier} \cdot \text{Hydrohead}^{k(c)}}, \quad \text{wherein}$$

ρ_f is the density of the barrier fibers, c is the solids volume fraction of the barrier web in units of kg/m³,

$$k(c) = 3.58 \cdot c^2 - 1.32 \cdot c + 1.77,$$

Frazier is in units of m³/m²-min, and

Hydrohead is in units of centimeters of water column.

15. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
16. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
17. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of mSB/fine fiber/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
18. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /MB/SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.

19. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of SB/MB/fine fiber/MB/SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
20. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /MB/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
21. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of mSB/MB/fine fiber/MB/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
22. (Previously Presented /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1 or 14, comprising a structure of SB/MB/fine fiber /SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
23. (Previously Presented) A nonwoven fabric of claim 1, wherein said support web comprises fibers having diameters less than about 20 times the barrier web fiber diameters.
24. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 23, wherein said support web fibers have diameters less than about 13 micrometers.